Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – July 7, 2026

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment – July 2, 2026

Item No. 6 Establishing Policies for the Protection of Waterways

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back in 180 days on the following:

    A. A cross-jurisdictional analyses of best practices in other Canadian municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, with respect to:

        i. Riparian protection
        ii. Ecological reserves
        iii. Public access
        iv. Habitat conservation, and
        v. Riverbank management

    B. The feasibility of establishing a minimum 90-foot (27.4 metre) ecological setback from waterways for new development and redevelopment projects, except where site-specific circumstances warrant alternative treatment, based on a review of existing riverbank, shoreline, and waterway setback requirements throughout the city.

    C. The environmental, financial, legal, and planning implications associated with implementing enhanced waterway setback requirements, including impacts on flood protection, erosion control, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and long-term maintenance costs.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Browaty,

That Rule 10(3) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended in order that the following item, which was received less than four business days preceding the committee meeting, be considered by Committee.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Eadie,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 2, 2026, the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment concurred in the Council Motion of June 25, 2026, and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

The following persons submitted communications in support of the matter:

Debbie Vokey, Chair, Glenwood Neighbourhood Association
Denis DePape
Michele Kading
Shelley Sweeney
Lloyd Johnson, Chair, Little Mountain Park Conservancy Group Inc.
Julien Nayet-Pelletier
Nicole Desautels
Stacy Gosman
Diane Bousquet, Warming Souls With Soup
Richard Remnant, Secretary, Save Our Seine River Environment Inc.
Katharina Stieffenhofer, Growing Local Productions
Bev Pike, Coordinator, South Osborne Residents Group Inc.
Cat M Gauthier
Jean Altemeyer
Dave Green, OURS-Winnipeg and Trees Please Winnipeg

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

On June 25, 2026, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment:

Moved by Councillor Gilroy,
Seconded by Councillor Mayes,

WHEREAS Winnipeg's rivers, creeks, and waterways are among the city's most important natural assets, providing ecological, recreational, cultural, and environmental benefits for residents and future generations;

WHEREAS healthy riparian corridors help improve water quality, reduce erosion, mitigate flooding, support biodiversity, and provide critical habitat for wildlife;

WHEREAS the City's waterways are increasingly under pressure from urban development, infrastructure expansion, and encroachment along riverbanks and shorelines;

WHEREAS municipalities such as Edmonton and Calgary have adopted stronger policies and setbacks to preserve natural river corridors, protect ecological function, and ensure public enjoyment of waterways;

WHEREAS Winnipeg's planning and development policies have historically focused primarily on development and engineering considerations, while ecological protection and long-term environmental stewardship have often received less emphasis;

WHEREAS the protection of waterways requires a balanced approach that prioritizes environmental sustainability, public access, climate resilience, and the preservation of natural landscapes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Public Service be directed to report back in 180 days on the following:

1. An cross-jurisdictional analyses of best practices in other Canadian municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, with respect to:

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment – July 2, 2026

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

A. Riparian protection
B. Ecological reserves
C. Public access
D. Habitat conservation, and
E. Riverbank management

2. The feasibility of establishing a minimum 90-foot (27.4 metre) ecological setback from waterways for new development and redevelopment projects, except where site-specific circumstances warrant alternative treatment, based on a review of existing riverbank, shoreline, and waterway setback requirements throughout the city,

3. The environmental, financial, legal, and planning implications associated with implementing enhanced waterway setback requirements, including impacts on flood protection, erosion control, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and long-term maintenance costs.